

# State of Maine

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



### Resources:

United States Consumer  
Product Safety Commission

[www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

Environmental Protection  
Agency

[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

Maine State Bureau of Health

[www.state.me.us/dhs/boh/index.htm](http://www.state.me.us/dhs/boh/index.htm)

National Clearinghouse for Edu-  
cational Facilities

[www.edfacilities.org](http://www.edfacilities.org)

National Program for  
Playground Safety

[www.uni.edu/playground/home.html](http://www.uni.edu/playground/home.html)

National Recreation and  
Park Association

[www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org)

National Safety Council

[www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)

American Society for Testing  
Materials

[www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org)

Maine School Facilities  
Maintenance Plan Template

[www.maine.gov/education/const/  
fmthome.htm](http://www.maine.gov/education/const/fmthome.htm)

To learn if Maine has passed new  
legislation dealing with playground  
safety and design, visit the **State of  
Maine** legislative website at:

[http://janus.state.me.us/legis/  
statutes/search.asp](http://janus.state.me.us/legis/statutes/search.asp)

### PLAYGROUND SAFETY: GUIDELINES TO HELP KEEP PLAYGROUNDS IN MAINE SAFE

The Department of Educa-  
tion has a Maine School  
Facilities Maintenance Plan  
Template to address play-  
ground safety expectations.  
Be sure to check the Main-  
tenance Plan Template for  
any updates!

#### Maine Guidelines

- Playgrounds inspected on a semi-annual basis.
- No sharp edges, corners, or points on equipment.
- All wooden parts are structurally sound, smooth, and free from splinters.
- There are no accessible pinch, crush, or shear points on equipment.
- There are no openings that could trap a child's head.
- All anchoring devices are below grade level.
- All retaining walls are highly visible.
- Pest Management is inspected weekly, when in use, for stinging insects or other pest problems.
- Flexible or suspended components are not located in high traffic areas.
- Suspended components contrast with surrounding equipment.
- Surfacing materials meet critical height values. Along with proper drainage and maintenance to prevent mold and mildew.
- Landing zone must meet safety specifications.

The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission also has recommendations for playground safety (see Resources).

#### Areas of Concern

- Surfaces—Should consist of hardwood or cedar chips, sand, mulch, pea gravel, rubber chips, or rubber mats. They should be at least 12 inches deep, with a surface space that spans at least 6 feet in all directions. For swings the surface should be twice the height of the suspending bar. Continuous maintenance (e.g., grading and raking) for the surface material is needed to prevent mold and mildew from growing. Proper drainage is a must.
- Space—Structures more than 30 inches high should be spaced at least 9 feet apart. Make sure the spaces in guardrails, ladders, and other spots on the playground cannot trap a child. The spaces should measure less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches. This will help eliminate the possibility of a child becoming trapped.
- Dangerous Hardware—Watch out for "S" hooks and protruding materials, such as bolt ends. Also keep an eye out for sharp points or edges.
- Tripping Hazards—Look out for exposed concrete footings, tree stumps, and rocks. Also make sure that elevated platforms and ramps have

guardrails to help prevent a child from falling off the equipment.

□ Check the playground continually—Especially in Maine, weather conditions very often change the characteristics of a playground. Safety hazards and materials, molds and mildews, and fractured equipment may occur at any time. Constant



maintenance is vital for the safety of public playgrounds.

□ Wood Structures—The use of **arsenic-treated** wood in the construction of playground equipment, railings, entryways, benches, and decks poses a health threat to children. Wooden structures should be tested to see if they contain arsenic; if so they should be sealed annually with a penetrating oil sealant or stain. This will help to contain the arsenic within the wood and provide safer play surfaces.

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### CONTACT INFORMATION

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